

## Message Text

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44

ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 AID-05 IGA-01 EB-07 OMB-01 TRSE-00

CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05

PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 SAJ-01 /071 W

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R 211147Z NOV 75

FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4649

INFO CINCPAC HONO

COMUSMACHTAI

C O N F I D E N T I A L BANGKOK 24622

CINCPAC ALSO FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, MILL, TH, US

SUBJECT: FOREIGN MINISTER CHATCHAI'S COMMENTS ON U.S. MILITARY AID

1. FOREIGN MINISTER CHATCHAI MADE A STRONG PITCH TO THE AMBASSADOR ON NOVEMBER 21 FOR ADDITIONAL U.S. MILITARY AID TO HELP THAILAND STRENGTHEN ITS DEFENSES AGAINST AGGRESSIVE COMMUNIST NEIGHBORS. AS REQUIREMENT NUMBER ONE, CHATCHAI SAID IT WAS MOST IMPORTANT THAT THE UNITED STATES PROVIDE EMERGENCY SUPPORT TO HELP THAILAND BRING 16 ARMY AND TWO MARINE BATTALIONS UP TO FULL STRENGTH. HE SAID THAILAND WOULD GUARANTEE THAT EVERY POSITION IN THESE UNITS, WHICH ALREADY EXIST BUT ARE UNDERSTRENGTH, WAS FILLED BUT IT NEEDED OUR HELP WITH EQUIPMENT. HE SAID HE WOULD RAISE THIS WITH THE SECRETARY NOVEMBER 26 IN AN EFFORT TO OBTAIN AGREEMENT IN PRINCIPLE FOR U.S. ASSISTANCE WITH DETAILS TO BE WORKED OUT LATER IN BANGKOK. (WE WILL COMMENT ON THIS IN A SEPARATE MESSAGE.) CHATCHAI STRESSED HIS BELIEF THAT THAILAND COULD MEET THE THREAT FROM ITS NEIGHBORS AND MAINTAIN ITS INDEPENDENCE WITH U.S. HELP.

2. AS THE NEXT MAJOR AREA, CHATCHAI SAID IT IS ESSENTIAL THAT THAILAND DEVELOP GREATER CAPACITY TO PRODUCE ESSENTIAL  
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ARMAMENTS. HE MENTIONED IN PARTICULAR 60MM AND 81 MM MORTAR

SHELLS, HAND GRENADES AND 105 MM HOWITZER SHELLS. WHEN THE AMBASSADOR AND DCM NOTED THAT IT WOULD NOT BE ECONOMICALLY FEASIBLE TO BUILD A PLANT TO MEET THAILAND'S REQUIREMENTS ALONE, CHATCHAI SAID THE RTG WAS FULLY AWARE OF THIS FACT AND HE WOULD RAISE THIS PROBLEM AT THE FORTHCOMING ASEAN SUMMIT MEETING TO FIND A REGIONAL SOLUTION. PLAYING BACK POINTS WE HAVE MADE TO HIM AND HIS STAFF IN THE PAST, CHATCHAI SAID IT WAS ESSENTIAL THAT THE ASEAN NATIONS STANDARDIZE THEIR WEAPONS AND THAT, AS A GROUP, THEY MOVE TOWARD GREATER SELF SUFFICIENCY. HE SAID IF A U.S. FIRM WERE SET UP IN THAILAND TO PRODUCE AMMUNITION, THAILAND WOULD ALLOW THIS FIRM TO EXPORT TO ASEAN AND OTHER NATIONS. HE EXPRESSED OPTIMISM THAT THE OTHER MEMBERS OF ASEAN WOULD BE WILLING TO BUY CERTAIN TYPES OF AMMUNITION AND WEAPONRY FROM PLANTS LOCATED IN THAILAND.

3. WAVING A PAPER OBVIOUSLY PREPARED BY THE ROYAL THAI AIR FORCE, CHATCHAI SAID THAT THE AIR FORCE WANTED A SQUADRON OF F5E'S AND THREE SQUADRONS OF OV-10'S. BOTH THE AMBASSADOR AND THE DCM POINTED OUT THE HIGH INITIAL COST OF F5E'S, THE DIFFICULTY AND EXPENSE OF MAINTAINING THEM AND THE DESIRABILITY FOR THAILAND TO CONCENTRATE ITS RESOURCES ON ITEMS WITH MORE IMMEDIATE RELEVANCE TO THE THREAT THAILAND FACES. THEY COVERED ALSO THE PROBLEMS WE HAVE ENCOUNTERED IN THE PAST IN TRYING TO MEET THAILAND'S REQUESTS FOR OV-10'S. THE AMBASSADOR OUTLINED FOR CHATCHAI OUR EFFORTS TO HELP THAILAND GET ITS A-37'S (NOW GROUNDED BECAUSE OF DIFFICULTY IN THE FUEL SYSTEM) BACK IN THE AIR. AFTER FURTHER DISCUSSION BACK AND FORTH, CHATCHAI SEEMED TO AGREE THAT IT WOULD NOT BE DESIRABLE FOR THAILAND TO PRESS FOR F5E'S BUT WE BELIEVE HE WILL MAKE A PITCH IN WASHINGTON FOR OV-10'S.

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## Message Attributes

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